843 pregnancy in a woman. It is also known that the woman will give birth in nine months, but since it is impossible to be sure of the date of delivery, the pregnant woman is watched over constantly and is under the surveillance of the old women. In a general way, nature is allowed to take its course, but some people prefer to consult the soothsayers and the priests and to give alms and sacrifices to avoid a miscarriage.

[787 782]

During pregnancy, women are forbidden to eat honey and, in general, any sweet foods.

Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

844 Delivery. Delivery takes place in the woman's own hut. There is no special preparation. [190] Old women who have had much practice help the mother while others heat water in which to cleanse the newborn child of all impurities.

No one except the old women is present during the delivery.

[842] Women who have not yet borne children are sent away, and for good reason since the sight of the birth process might make them sterile.

Finally, if the afterbirth does not come out at the time of birth or soon after, there are certain special measures taken to hasten its emergence.

●846 Three or four days after the delivery, depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl, the mother, who has so far remained indoors, goes out for the first time.

She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

The new mother's co-wives and relatives bring her safandé (soap), kamé (karite butter), and kalgo (soumbala); others give her cowries. The father has a sheep or rooster killed and a millet cake prepared.

The woman who acted as midwife is sent a ball of sagbo (millet mush) and a chicken leg. The heads of the mother and child are partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

[307]

553 Choice of a name. Among the Mossi, a child's personal name depends on circumstances which preceded the birth or on an important

844 the child is washed in warm water and then placed on a mat in a sort of nest made with old skirt cloths and various bits of fabric. Then the woman is placed on the mat next to the child which can now be suckled. Let us note, however, one final ceremony. Before the
844 woman gives the breast, the child is washed in dolo, especially the
853 inside /253/ of the nose and the genitalia, for the Mossi, like the
826 Bambara, are convinced that mother's milk has an injurious effect on these two parts of a child's anatomy. If the child, while suckling, should breathe in some milk through its nose, this would, it is said, cause the interior of the organ to rot. Likewise, were a few drops to fall on its genitalia, that part would suffer from it. The dolo prevents such lamentable accidents.

● 846 At the end of three days, the woman leaves the compound and goes to pay a call on the old women who helped her and to thank them. After two weeks or a month, she takes up her usual tasks.

854 The Mossi and Foulsé women of Yatenga carry their children on the back after the fashion of other Sudanese women, holding them in a skirt cloth which they tie and knot up in front over the breasts.

851 Baptism. —No celebration takes place at birth. The child is bap-
553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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595 797 182 co-wives and other women of the extended families. Even the Catholic husbands would not help their wives with household tasks requiring more than one person, nor would they violate tradition by chatting with their wives except at night in their huts. Another factor is that after the Mossi Christian [846] woman has given birth to a child, she follows the traditional custom and goes back to her parents' home to remain there during the two or three years' lactation period. This imposes a great hardship on a Catholic husband because during this time he is left without wife or helpmate. In the extended family household there would have been women to take care of a man's material needs, and his mistresses would have taken care of his sexual needs. The Catholic can and does ask the mission for a young girl to take care of his material needs, but of course she is not expected to satisfy his sexual de- [837] sires. Obviously this arrangement is not satisfactory, and many Catholic men, with the acquiescence of their wives, keep mistresses. Dim Delobson comments:

> Ouagadougou has a large number of Christians, but does this mean that these people in their love for the church respect all her rules? Alas! there are a large number of Christians who oblige their lawful wives to leave the conjugal couch and make way for the accommodation of mistresses . . . in conformity with the old custom. But this is a subject which is too delicate to discuss further. I only note it in passing: *Noli me tangere* (1934:169).

797 794 Despite the influence of tradition on Mossi Catholics, I feel it would be a mistake to say that the complexity of Catholic dogma is one of the drawbacks to missionary success in this country. One Mossi has already been made a bishop of the Catholic Church, and most of the proselytizing in Manga falls on the two Mossi priests and the five Mossi nuns. Under the supervision of two White Fathers, the Catholic children and adults are acquainted with the dogma and rituals of the church. The festivals are well attended and celebrated with as much pomp as possible. Although the Mass is sung in Latin, the Mossi have adapted some of their traditional tunes to the Mass, and use their own language for prayers and hymns. Catholics observe all the sacraments including Confession—a sacrament which is hazardous from the Mossi point of view, because man must lay bare his innermost thoughts to the priests, who, in the final analysis, are Europeans and thus administrators.

It is true that even the staunchest Catholics in Manga have not abandoned all belief in traditional rituals and religious credos. For example, many [754] Mossi Catholics believe in the existence of sorcerers, but the Catholic Church does not recognize the existence of sorcerers or such evil forces (I have met White Fathers who believe that there are unexplainable psychic and physical phenomena in Africa), and moreover has no way of dealing with them. "But," says Dim Delobson (1934:136), "the Mossi believe so strongly in the power of such entities, that even those converted to Christianity cannot always escape the action of malevolent practitioners." The result is that many Catholics desert the church when they believe that only traditional specialists can help them with personal problems. Catholic families easily aban-